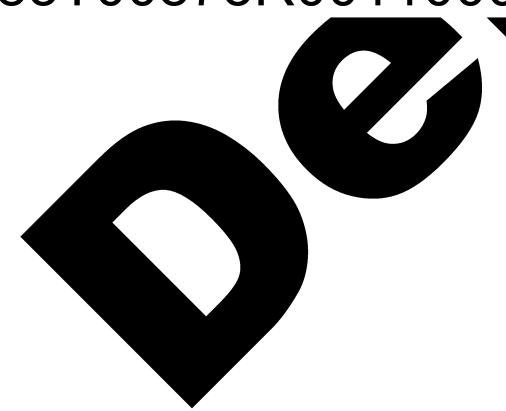
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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE



# Developments in Indochina

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**Top Secret** 

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28 March 1973

State Dept. review completed



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	28 March 19	73
	DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA	
	(Information as of 1500)	
	SOUTH VIETNAM	Page 1
•	A presidential aide has discussed possible Buddhist candidates for the third segment of the Council of Reconciliation. Saigon has denied that any secret talks are going on with the Viet Cong. Mixed signals are being received on Communist military intentions. Communist administrative functions in Quang Tri Province are being run from North Vietnam.	
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•	CAMBOD IA	6
25X1 • 25X1	man has been given command of the politically important Phnom Penh Special Region.	
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#### SOUTH VIETNAM

### Thieu Approaches the Buddhists

Although the government has not committed itself to proposing Buddhists for the council, the meeting is the latest in a number of government gestures toward the An Quang movement that have gone beyond any previous attempts at reconciliation. The move also suggests that the government may intend to propose some genuinely independent anti-Communist candidates for the third segment of the council. Earlier reporting indicated that the government might propose only its sympathizers for the council in the expectation that the Communists would probably try to fill their side with Communist adherents.

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## Saigon - Viet Cong Talks

A member of Saigon's delegation to the bilateral talks with the Viet Cong in Paris has denied

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a Saigon press report that secret talks between the two sides were taking place. The delegate told US officials that Saigon had proposed such talks but that the Viet Cong had not accepted. Another member of Saigon's delegation told US officials that despite the lack of progress in the talks, the delegation has no plans to change its tactics of "hammering away" on Saigon's proposed version of the agenda.

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#### More on Communist Intentions

Senior Communist party and military officers in a Viet Cong region northeast of Saigon reportedly have been told that COSVN's latest instructions call for Communist forces to establish strong "defensive positions" and prepare for "retaliatory actions" in several provinces. Their commander indicated that COSVN expected government operations, including air strikes, against territories seized by the Communists when the cease-fire went into effect.

These instructions appear to supplement COSVN's Directive 2 on the cease-fire period and suggest the directive is still valid and briefings based on it are continuing. In the lower delta, leading Communist political and military officers are being told that the "basic requirement" of the directive is to expand Viet Cong - controlled areas and to increase the population in such areas. To meet this requirement, the Communists are to push the "rapid" establishment of a "revolutionary government" in areas where Saigon's control is shaky. resort to heavy military action in this area to expand the insurgent governmental apparatus was to be avoided, however, since the military units in the sector were weak and would be badly damaged by a major military effort at this time.

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	Approved For Release 2008/02/15 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100010027-6	25X1
25X1	There are scattered reports that the Communists in several areas of the South are being told to prepare for another "major" military confrontation. Senior Communist officials in the northern delta reportedly do not believe any agreement will be reached between the Viet Cong and the Saigon government in Paris and are planning continued light military actions, to be followed by "heavy attacks" at some undefined future date.	25X1
	Communist Administration in Quang Tri Province	
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	The governmental apparatus in northern Quang	
	Tri Province so far remains a direct part of the North Vietnamese administrative structure. This appears to be a matter of convenience, rather than an indication that North Vietnam plans to annex this section of territory formally. The Communists have consistently portrayed their controlled areas in the South as under the authority of the Viet Cong, rather than the North Vietnamese. Indeed, the existence of an administrative structure in Quang Tri tied to the North may help explain the Communist failure to surface any overt governmental bodies at all in this	

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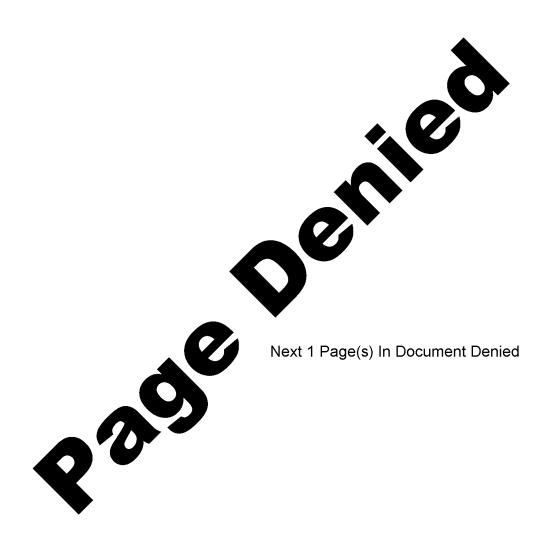
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Revolutionary Government.

area; the apparatus there now would be very difficult to pass off as a part of the Viet Cong's Provisional

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#### CAMBODIA

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### The Military Situation

No significant developments in the military situation were reported on 27 March, as Khmer insurgent forces retained their hold over sections of Routes 1 and 4. In Phnom Penh, some changes in senior army command assignments have been announced. Most of these involve postings to various military regions, including the politically important Phnom Penh Special Region. The new officer in charge of the capital's defenses is a career police official who is a close associate of Brigadier General Lon Non.

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